

Killing the NFL

From: Ron Paiz

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to longtalltexan, Michael, Bonnie, Bonnie, Beth

Interesting read on a Navy Officer.

[Saints: It's 'unfortunate' vet rejects honor over anthem protests](#)

Saints: It's 'unfortunate' vet rejects honor over anthem protests

A Navy veteran is taking a stand against those taking a knee.

John Wells, a retired U.S. Navy commander, turned down an offer from the Saints to be honored prior to last Sunday's game against the Bears because he can't "in good conscience" enter an NFL stadium due to the ongoing national anthem protests.

"Although I am touched and honored to be selected for such an award, the ongoing controversy with NFL players' disrespect for the national flag forces me to decline to participate in the presentation," Wells wrote, according to a release, per reports. "I am unable, in good conscience, to enter an NFL stadium while this discourtesy prevails. Since this award is tainted with the dishonorable actions of the NFL and its players, I cannot accept it."

Wells, who is the executive director of Military Veterans Advocacy, was slated to receive the Peoples Health Champion Award, an honor awarded at Saints home games to recognize "the exceptional achievements of Louisiana residents age 65 and older."

Wells described the national anthem protests as "a slap in the face" to military veterans.

"Men and women have fought and died for the flag that the players are disrespecting," Wells wrote.

The Saints called Well's decision "unfortunate and disappointing" in a lengthy statement released Thursday.

"Respectfully and honorably, we chose Mr. Wells for the Peoples Health Champion Award purposefully for this game to bring to light the exact issues that he and his organization represent - the health and well being of our military, veterans and their families," the Saints said in a statement.

"Unfortunately, he has chosen very publicly not to accept this honor and refused the opportunity to promote the very cause for which he was being honored and distract from awareness we hoped to build throughout our community. We respect his decision, he has that right, and we thank him for his service to our country and his past efforts on behalf of the military and veterans."

The Saints later point out every player has stood for the national anthem since the franchise was founded in 1967 -- outside of Week 3 this season where "a few of our players did sit."

Since then, the Saints have kneeled prior to the anthem in a show of unity against racism and social injustice before rising and standing for the anthem.

Despite the fact the team kneels before the anthem, and not during it, fans have continuously booed the team for their actions, something Saints safety Kenny Vaccaro addressed Thursday.

"Our crowd boos us before the anthem, therefore it's not about the flag, it's about the fact we are bringing awareness to a cause that makes people uncomfortable," Vaccaro wrote in a string of tweets.

When a fan said people are mad because they believe the Saints will eventually sit during the anthem again since they did so earlier in the season, Vaccaro responded, "We already said what we were gonna do so get the picture or don't come."

Mike, what are your thoughts about the officer not attending the football game?

Sent from my iPhone

Ron: thanks for asking for my thoughts. In general, this latest story from the Saints provides an excellent juxtaposition of protest vs counter-protest, of loyalty vs honor.

My thoughts: both sides are right!

By that, I mean that *in their own minds*, both parties consider that they are doing the honorable thing. And America being what it is, the NFL will have a long, long time to recover from its players being 'right' in their own minds.

Two background 'facts' have to be considered: This all started [last year in 2016] when Colin Kaepernick was far from being the starting QB for the 49ers, and [it certainly appears that] he was influenced by his girlfriend [Nessa](#), a Black Lives Matter activist and local San Francisco 'personality'. From her came the (three games in preseason) incident of Kaepernick [Kap] sitting on the bench during the National Anthem, waiting to be asked why he was doing that. No one asked, but one person at least noticed (the first two preseason games he was not dressed out for the game). A former Navy Seal who was offended by this (whereas the TV and the country, in general, had not noticed) had a 'beer summit' with Kap. Kap told him about his feelings about the country, about his protesting: "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that [oppresses black people](#) and people of color." white police officers shooting blacks, etc. The Navy Seal told Kap that he would be less offended if Kap were to at least kneel rather than sit during the anthem. Kap took him up, switched to kneeling, which moved him from the bench into the line of players. The TV cameras picked it up, and away we went.

There is always a woman behind every man? I am absolutely sure that woman is convinced she is doing 'the right thing'!

She continues to be involved, and some would say, to 'mess things up'. Consider this recent [6 Sep 2017] revelation:

A tweet from Colin Kaepernick's girlfriend may have played a role in preventing the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback from getting a job with the Baltimore Ravens, according to former football great Ray Lewis.

Lewis was one of several people Ravens owner Steve Bisciotti and general manager Ozzie Newsome consulted with while trying to decide whether to bring Kaepernick in to back up the banged-up Joe Flacco at quarterback.

Kaepernick created a storm of controversy last season by refusing to stand for the national anthem before games. He hasn't found work since opting out of his contract with the 49ers in March, and some people think he's being blackballed.

In his new role as analyst on Showtime's "Inside the NFL," Lewis spoke of how close the Ravens were to bringing Kaepernick in to discuss a possible contract. "Steve Bisciotti said, 'I want to hear Colin Kaepernick speak to let me know that he wants to play football,' " Lewis said on the episode that aired Tuesday night. "It never happened because that picture comes out the next day."

The picture Lewis referred to is actually a tweet sent out by TV and radio personality Nessa Diab, pairing a photo of Lewis with his arms around Bisciotti to one of a slave with his arms around his master from the movie "Django Unchained." Her caption was simply a bull's-eye emoji along with Lewis' Twitter handle.



[@raylewis pic.twitter.com/N9k7nDgmDh](https://twitter.com/N9k7nDgmDh)

— NESSA (@nessnitty) August 3, 2017

She tweeted the image on Aug. 2, the same day Lewis was facing criticism for seeming to defend the Ravens' hesitation to sign Kaepernick on FS1's "Undisputed."

"His girl goes out and puts out this racist gesture and doesn't know we're in the back office about to try to get this guy to sign," Lewis said on "Inside the NFL."

"... The only thing that went bad was that image where she tried to make us [into] racist individuals."

Lewis added: "When they call me, it's to say, 'Yes,' or, 'No.' We were gonna close the deal to sign him. All we wanted to hear was Colin Kaepernick speak."

Asked whether Kaepernick would be a Raven if it weren't for that tweet, Lewis said: "Then he's flying him to Baltimore, I'm sitting with all three of those [guys], we're all having a conversation about bringing Colin Kaepernick in."

It's unclear just what role the tweet played in the decision not to bring in Kaepernick. Did it offend Bisciotti so much that he pulled the plug on the whole idea? Did it change the mind of Lewis, who said he had been supportive of Kaepernick throughout the process? Did the decision-makers feel the tweet was indicative of Kaepernick's feelings about the organization?

Lewis didn't say. But he did indicate that he's unhappy with the way he's been portrayed.

"This is the only thing that frustrates me a little bit," Lewis said. "I lived police injustice — I lived it. So for somebody to tell me that I'm racist? No, what I found out was, I found out that all cops are not bad cops. And I found out that all people that work for the system are not bad people. You can't put everybody in one box. There's not one word you can ever find where I criticized and said, 'I don't like Colin Kaepernick, and I think it's terrible.' I never said it."

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More discussion later, perhaps - but your question and this whole cultural incident will be a chapter in my upcoming book, *Blackledge Stories*. The question framing my chapter is not unlike Ron's: What would my father think about this kneeling thing? The answer there, I'm sure Pete would agree, is very simple, very unlayered: "Fire the bastards!" Our father came from a very different generation ... aka 'The Greatest' but certainly a 'less nuanced' generation in a much simpler time.

- Mike

<http://beta.latimes.com/sports/sportsnow/la-sp-kaepernick-ravens-lewis-20170906-story.html>
